

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BONN 18059

DEPARTMENT PASS AGRICULTURE FOR HUME, GOODMAN, MEEKRE

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: EAGR, GW

SUBJECT: MINISTER ERTL ON SOYBEANS

REF: (A) STATE 243293; (B) BONN 16874

1. WE HAVE BEEN INFORMED BY MINAG THAT MINISTER ERTL'S FORMAL REMARKS AS REPORTED IN REF B DID NOT INCLUDE THE SOYBEAN STATEMENT. THIS STATEMENT APPEARED TO BE AN AFTERTHOUGHT WHICH AROSE FROM HIS PERSONAL CONCERN WITH CONTINUING U.S. RESTRAINT PROGRAMS ON EXPORTS AND HIS RESPONSIBILITIES TO GERMAN AGRICULTURE. UNDERLYING HIS REMARKS IS A GROWING CONCERN THAT THE U.S. WILL NOT BE ABLE IN THE FUTURE TO MEET THE EXPANDING DEMANDS FOR LIVESTOCK INPUTS. ON THIS BASIS THE GERMANS WILL ENCOURAGE PRODUCTION OF SOYBEANS AND FEED GRAINS IN OTHER COUNTRIES IN AN ATTEMPT TO ASSURE THEMSELVES OF THOSE MARGINAL QUANTITIES WHICH THEY ARE CONCERNED THE U.S. CANNOT SUPPLY. WE HAVE MADE IT CLEAR TO MINISTER ERTL AND OTHER MINAG OFFICIALS THAT THE U.S. SHORTFALL THIS YEAR WAS UNIQUE AND THE PROBABILITY OF THESE CIRCUMSTANCES OCCURRING AGAIN ARE MINIMAL. FURTHER, WE HAVE POINTED OUT THAT WE HAVE MET THE EXPANDING GERMAN

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DEMAND FOR SOYBEANS AND CORN REQUIREMENTS AND THAT WE

ARE AND WILL REMAIN A RESPONSIBLE SUPPLIER.

2. REF A WAS INFORMALLY DISCUSSED WITH HIGH MINAG OFFICIALS AND BY THEM WITH MINISTER ERTL. WE WERE INFORMED THAT MINISTER ERTL EXPRESSED SURPRISE AT THE WIDE DISSEMINATION OF HIS INFORMAL REMARKS ON SOYBEANS MADE AT THE GERMAN FEED MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION MEETING IN AUGSBURG. HE EXPRESSED HIS PERSONAL DISAPPOINTMENT WITH THE U.S. EXPORT RESTRAINT PROGRAMS. HE FURTHER INDICATED THAT THE U.S. PROGRAMS ARE IMPOSSIBLE TO DEFEND TO HIS FRENCH COLLEAGUES IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY. HIS ARGUMENT LAST YEAR IN THE COMMUNITY THAT A SOYBEAN CAP WAS NOT NEEDED HAS, IN HIS TERMS, BEEN DISPROVEN BY OUR ACTIONS THIS YEAR. HIS FRENCH COLLEAGUES ARE NOW TAKING THE ATTITUDE OF "I TOLD YOU SO".

3. MINISTER ERTL'S MAJOR POINT WAS, HOWEVER, THAT IT IS HIS RESPONSIBILITY TO GUARANTEE THE WELFARE OF THE GERMAN LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY, WHICH CONSTITUTES THE MAJOR SECTOR OF GERMANY'S AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY. MINISTER ERTL REPUTEDLY SAID THAT GERMANY IS HIGHLY DEPENDENT ON SOYBEAN MEAL AND TO A LESSER DEGREE ON CORN TO ASSURE A HEALTHY AGRICULTURAL INDUSTRY. BECAUSE THIS IS HIS PRIMARY RESPONSIBILITY, HE WILL TAKE ALL ACTIONS POSSIBLE TO GUARANTEE HIS FARMERS ADEQUATE SUPPLIES OF THESE LIVESTOCK INPUTS.
HILLENBRAND

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